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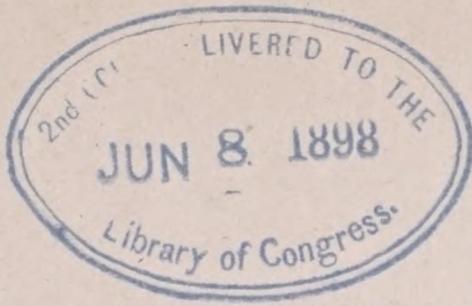
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ME AND MY DOLLS



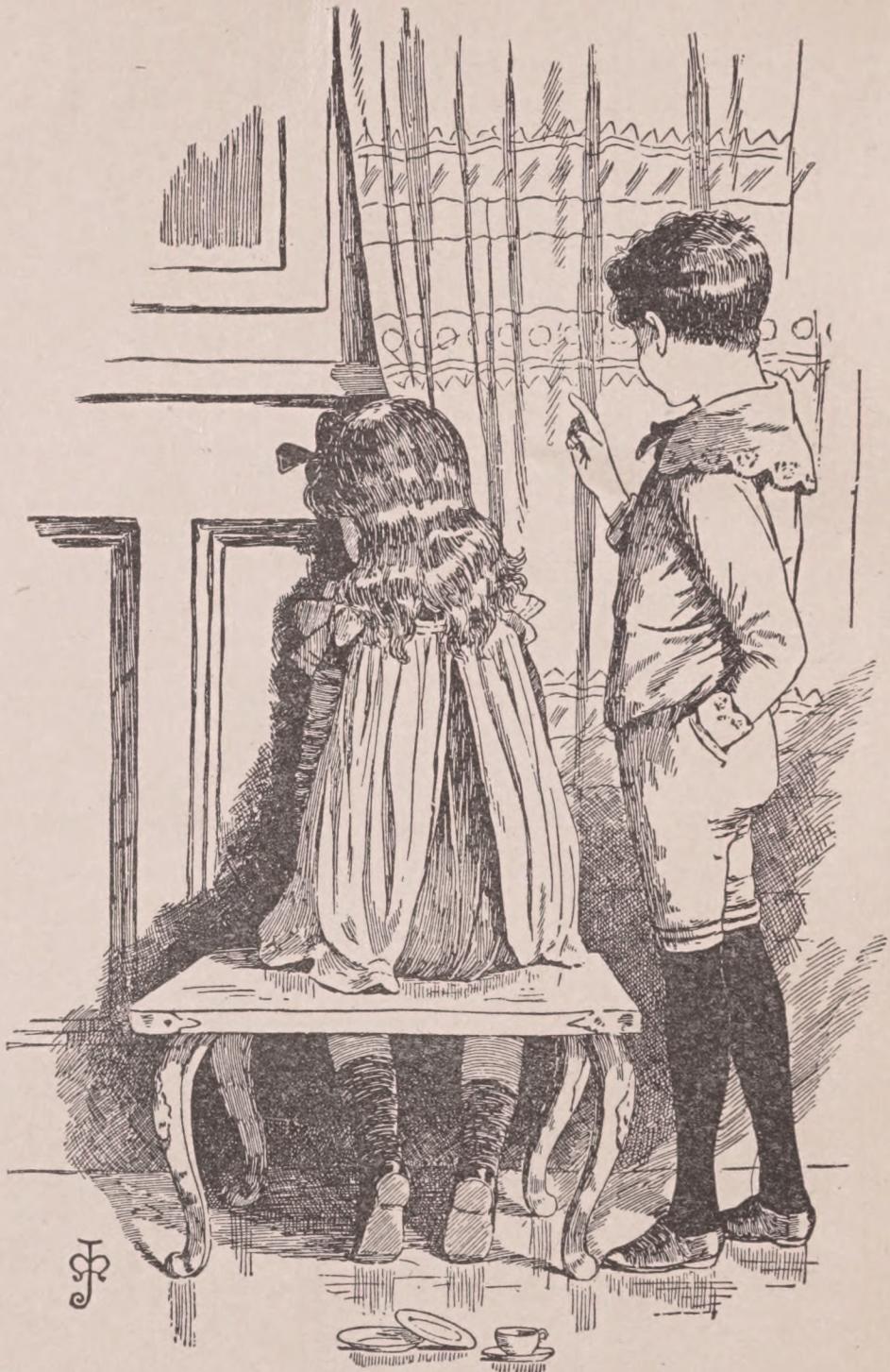
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"I USED TO CRY FOR LULLABY."

(See page 41.)

ME AND MY DOLLS

*The Story of the Joys and Troubles of Miss
Bo-Peep and Her Doll Family*

TO WHICH IS ADDED

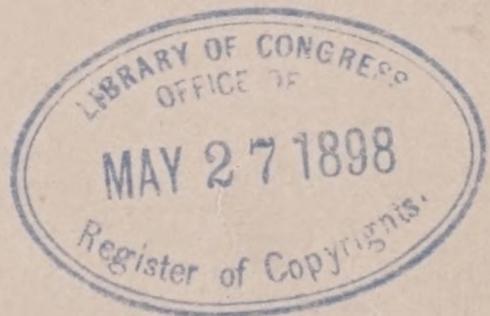
THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF MOPSY AND HANS

BY

(L. T. MEADE)

AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN'S PILGRIMAGE,"
"BERESFORD PRIZE," "BETTY, A
SCHOOLGIRL," ETC.

Illustrated



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ME AND MY DOLLS

ME AND MY DOLLS.

CHAPTER I.

MYSELF; ALSO PEEP-BO.

I DON'T think I am at all young: I am five.

Johnny is only two, and the baby — of course she is just a tiny thing; but I am big and rather old. I can run fast, and jump, and go round and round without being at all giddy. Nursie said once that Miss Bo-Peep must have a very strong head. I don't know quite what she meant, for I had not knocked it

against anything. I was just flying round and round the nursery, and Johnny was screaming and trying to follow me, and Frank was lashing his whip, because he was pretending that I was a pony, and that he was my master.

Frank is seven; he is very tall, and very strong. He is nearly grown up, and he can read and write.

I know my A B C as far as K, and I can do "A was an apple pie," and a bit of "The House that Jack built," but I cannot read and I cannot write, though I try very hard, and I do want to write *so* badly.

I want to write about my dolls. One of my dolls is lost,—I will tell you about her by and by. Then I have a doll called Molly,—she has only one arm,—and Peep-Bo, who has a funny head. Peep-

Bo was called after me, 'cause I am Bo-Peep, though my real, real own name is Maggie.

You see, people, that I have lots and lots to tell; and last night, when I was woke by baby crying because he is cutting his eye-tooth, I thought of my Lullaby, my doll that was lost in the snow.

I said, very soft, because I didn't want to wake anybody, "Nursie!"

Nursie said, "Do not make a noise, Bo-Peep!"

I wasn't making a noise. I was only saying "Nursie." I began to cry, and at last I roared, and Nursie jumped out of bed and said, "What's the matter, Pet?"

I knew Nursie was not angry when she said "Pet," and I said, with my cheek up against Nursie's ear, "Nursie, I'm thinking of Lullaby, that was lost in the snow."

"Oh! that doll!" Nursie said. "It is months and months ago since she was lost. Go to sleep, Miss Bo-Peep, and do not be silly."

Then I knew Nursie had almost forgotten my dolly; and, of course, if Nursie would forget, so would Frank, and perhaps soon there would be no people that would remember her. I knew then that it must be written down.

Ellen is now writing it down.

Ellen is the under-nurse, and she helps Nursie to take care of me and Frank and Johnny and Baby.

I love Ellen, she has such a softy face, and I like her eyes because they are big and stick out. I like eyes that stick out, because my dolly's did.

Now I will begin about my dolls.

I will tell first about Peep-Bo, be-



"ELLEN IS NOW WRITING IT DOWN."

cause she is my oldest doll. I got her when I was one. There was a cake, and a candle burning on the top of the cake, and Peep-Bo was standing near. Frank often tells me about it, because he can remember.

Peep-Bo was made of china, and she had red cheeks and a green dress and lovely yellow hair and blue eyes. I used to lick her yellow hair, and it came off, and then Nursie washed her, and she turned quite white all over. Frank said I cried; but I only remember the day when I dropped Peep-Bo, and her head came off. Frank said she was "no good" then, but I loved her better than ever.

I kept her darling little head in one place, and her body in another, and it seemed as good as having two Peep-Bo's.

One day Frank tried to mend my dolly,

— Frank is the most clever boy,— and he did stick her head on with something grandpapa gave him, only he did it wrong, — he stuck her head on to her little feet. She did look so funny, and Frank laughed and said she was “really no good” now, and I *must* throw her away,— but *I* never threw Peep-Bo away. I loved her more than ever.

She never got lost, poor Peep-Bo. She is in the toy cupboard now, with her little feet standing on the top of her head.

CHAPTER II.

MY CARAVAN.

WELL, I must tell about my birthday. I was five on my birthday, and there was a big cake, and five candles burning, and I knew that I was old. I had lots and lots of presents. I had a caravan, and a Noah's ark, and a round ball, and a box of chocolates, and heaps of other things; but I had no dolly. I wanted a dolly more than all my other toys, because my dolly Molly had only one leg and half an arm, and her nose was bitten off by Baby; and my dolly Peep-Bo was really no good at all except to stand in the cupboard.

Frank was looking at my toys, and he was playing with my fire-escape that

Nursie gave me, and he began to reckon on his fingers all the toys I had got.

“I wish it was my birthday,” Frankie said; “my birthday comes in the summer, and yours in the winter, Bo-Peep. I like the frosty and the snowy birthdays the best. I do wish mine was a snowy birthday.”

“Because they are the nicest birthdays,” I said; “and I was so glad mine was a winter birthday.”

“You have lots of new toys,” Frank said, and he gave a little sigh. “If you like, Bo-Peep, I will take your caravan out with me when I go for a walk with father, — it is much too cold for a girl to go out, and it would be very wrong to let the poor horse that is tied on to the caravan go without his exercise. Shall I take him out for you, Bo-Peep?”

"I don't think so," I said. "I think if I were to pull him up and down the nursery lots of times he'd do very well; and I want to put my doll Molly into the caravan and give her a beautiful ride."

Frank is a very fussy boy, and he sometimes gets red all over his face in a minute, and then I know he is going to go off into one of his fusses. Nursie calls them passions, but I call them fusses, 'cause they make such a noise.

Frank said, with his face all red and his eyes staring:

"You are nothing but a baby, Bo-Peep. Of course the horse wants fresh air, and you think he will get it in this nursery, but you are only a baby girl. I don't care whether your horse gets ill or not. I only wish I had a boy to play with."

Frank walked away, stamping his feet

very loud on the ground, and I saw the tips of his ears behind all scarlet.

I couldn't stand what he said. I was not a baby. I was a grown-up girl,—oh! he was unkind.

I ran for my doll Molly and I popped her into the caravan, and then I took my horse by the bridle and I went across the nursery and out on to the landing, and I went with my caravan, and my doll Molly, and my horse, bump, bump, bump, down the stairs. I was looking for Frank.

CHAPTER III.

MY DOLLY LULLABY.

ON the first landing I met Cook. She was coming up the stairs slowly, because she is fat. She is a darling, Cook is, and she makes cakes and almond taffy, and all sorts of lovely things. She was coming up-stairs now with something big in her arms.

I said, "Hullo, Cookie! What are you doing out of your kitchen? Doesn't you know that this is my birthday and you have to see about the cake?"

"The cake is all right, Bo-Peep," Cook said; "and I come up-stairs because of you, my dear,—I have brought you this."

“Oh! my dolly, my dolly,” I said. “Oh! I did want a dolly,” and I dropped my horse’s bridle and held out my arms very wide.

“She’s the best I could give you, dear,” Cook said; “and I am so sorry I hadn’t her finished sooner. I hadn’t her head fixed on quite right, Miss Bo-Peep, nor her lips painted properly until just now, or you should have had her before.”

“Oh! she’s so big, and so soft, and so darling!” I said. “Cook, I do love you.”

“She’s a very neat doll, I think,” Cook said. “I made her out of one of the master’s old shirts and two old pocket-handkerchiefs. I am sorry that I blotted her cheek, but the ink would run when I was drawing her nose.”

“She has a darling crookedy nose,” I

said; “and I like crookedy noses, because you have one, Cookie, dear.”

Cook laughed. “Well, Bo-Peep,” she said, “you will take your dolly back to the nursery, and I am glad you are pleased with her. Dear, dear, you have a grand caravan and no mistake; but why are you bringing it down-stairs, love?”

“I am looking for Frankie,” I said. “Frankie got into a fuss just now and went down-stairs. He said a lot of silly nonsense about me being a baby, but I aren’t, are I, Cook?”

“Dear me, no,” said Cook; “I call five quite a weight of years. Don’t you mind Master Frank’s nonsense, Miss Bo-Peep. Just go back to your nursery, and play with your new dolly.”

“I will, thank you, Cook,” I said, “and I am so obliged that you think I am old.”

Then I bumped my caravan up the stairs again, and I held my dolly that was made out of father's old shirts and Cook's pocket-handkerchiefs in my other hand, and I run in to Nursie.

"Nursie," I said, "see what I have got!"

"Well," Nursie said, "I call that a real comfortable doll,—a doll that won't get broke, and that you can carry about and not care whether it falls or not. Now I do like this doll."

"So do I," I said; "I think she is the darlingest dolly I ever saw. What name shall I call her, Nursie?"

"I think," said Nursie, "I would name her Lullaby, for if ever there was a doll to fondle and kiss, it is that doll in your arms this minute, Miss Bo-Peep. Why, you can take her to bed with you at

night and be a real mamma to her, my dear."

Then I sat down on the floor with my dolly in my arms, and I began to put her to sleep, because Nursie was putting baby to sleep. Nursie's eyes were, shut and she was rocking baby backwards and forwards and singing "Hush-a-bye, baby."

So I shut my eyes and I rocked myself up and down, and I sung "Hush-a-bye, baby," to my dolly Lullaby.

CHAPTER IV.

OUT OF BED AT THE WRONG SIDE.

I CAN never remember how time goes. Nursie says time goes so fast; but I think, and Frankie thinks the same, that time only creeps.

My dear snowy winter birthday was gone, and it seems to me that it was months and months after my birthday that I spent such a naughty day. Ellen says it was only two weeks after my birthday, but I really do think that Ellen is wrong.

Well,—one day I got up naughty. I did feel cross, and I did not care for Lullaby, and I did not want the sun to shine,

and I did not want baby to laugh. I would splash when I was in my bath, and I would scream when Ellen was tangling up my hair after washing it.

Ellen said, "Now try and be good, Miss Bo-Peep," but I was not going to try, and Nursie said, "It is my opinion that Miss Bo-Peep has got out of bed at the wrong side."

Now really Nursie was too silly to talk in that way, for one side of my bed was up against the wall, and how could I get out at that side? I would not take notice of Nurse or of Ellen, and I walked into the day nursery with my head well up in the air. I said to myself, "I am five, and I am no baby, and I have not been treated proper."

Frank was at his breakfast,—Frank's cheeks were as round and red as apples,

and his eyes were dancing up and down, and his hair was all goldy because the sun was shining across it.

The minute I came in, Frank said, "Look here, Bo-Peep, you may eat up your breakfast as fast as ever you like, and then I am going to tell you a secret."

I felt quite good again, for I do love secrets, and I sat down by Frankie's side and ate up my bread and milk as fast as possible. "I am ready now, Frankie," I said. "I have eaten up all my breakfast of bread and milk,—so what is the secret, please?"

Frank's eyes did twinkle very fast. "I heard what Nursie said just now," he said; "she was quite right, and you did get out of bed the wrong side, Bo-Peep."

"Oh, Frankie," I began, "you are a silly."



“‘I AM READY NOW, FRANKIE,’ I SAID.”

“Hush,” Frankie said, putting up his hand. “Nursie did not mean it literal,— it just shows what a baby you still are, Bo-Peep, or you would know what she did mean. Anyhow, it does not much matter, and you need not get so red in the face. You are a very naughty girl to-day, aren’t you?”

“Well, perhaps I are,” I said.

“You feel something as pussy does when her coat is rubbed the wrong way.”

“I am like pussy,” I said.

“Bo-Peep,” Frank said, “I like you when you are naughty.”

“Oh!” I said.

“I do like you when you are naughty,” Frank said. “I will tell you why I like you when you are naughty, Bo-Peep; because I am naughty, too. I am rubbed the wrong way like the pussy cat, and I

got out of bed at the wrong side; and I will tell you what it is, Bo-Peep, you and I will do something 'mendous naughty together,—this is what we will do."

CHAPTER V.

DOWN THE STAIRS TO THE GARDEN.

I NEVER did see Frankie look nicer. I crept up very close to him, and I said, "I love you, Frankie. I do love you."

"Oh! that's all right," Frankie said, "you may love me if you like, Bo-Peep; but that is nothing to say to what we have got to do now."

"What have we got to do?" I said.

Frank jumped off his chair and ran to the window.

"It is snowing, I do declare," he said. "That is jolly. The sun has gone to bed, just as I wished him to go. Come here, Bo-Peep." I came.

“I hope you are not deaf,” Frank said, “because I will have to speak to you in a whisper; perhaps I had better run down-stairs and fetch grandpa’s ear-trumpet, and speak to you through that.”

“Oh! but indeed I am not at all deaf,” I said.

“Well, hold up your ear and put your hands around, and then I will speak right in, and you must listen very hard and ask no questions, but just do what I tell you.”

“All right,” I said, “I am ready now,” and I put my two hands round my ear as Frank wanted me.

We were all by our two selves, and I do not know why Frank could not have spoke to me as usual, but he did not. He blew out his cheeks very big, and he run to me, and he shouted so loud:

“Let’s come down-stairs without no-

body seeing us, and let's go out into the garden and make snowballs, and let's take your new caravan and your horse Rover with us, and let's come quick; we must be naughty to do it, so let's come quick while we feel naughty."

"Oh, yes! we must be naughty," I said, jumping up and down; "we must be very, very naughty to do it,—and oh! Frankie, darling, may I put my dear dolly Lullaby into the caravan?"

"If you like," Frankie said. "It's a very ugly rag doll, and it will be wet through when we fill the caravan with snowballs, but you may bring it if you like. Now, look sharp, Bo-Peep. I will run down-stairs and wait for you at the garden door, and you come after me as fast as possible with the caravan and the horse Rover and the doll."

Frank was unkind to speak like that of my dolly, but my heart was bumping too quick for me to mind him then.

I ran into the night nursery and I took Lullaby out of my cot, and I put her into the caravan,—oh! I was afraid Nurse and Ellen would see, but they never looked, and I got out on the landing, and I ran down the stairs, and the horse Rover, and the caravan with my doll Lullaby inside, came bumpety, bumpety, bump, after me.

CHAPTER VI.

DOWN IN A DRIFT.

WHEN I got down the stairs, Frankie said, "Come on, Bo-Peep. No one sees, and we will go out by the big door." There was no one in the hall. I joyfully helped Frankie open the big doors.

"We will be naughtier," said he, "to go through the evergreens into the garden, because the snow will rub off on us and we will be wetter."

So Frankie went along in the new snow, and I went behind him and dragged my caravan. The trees were heavy with snow, and it wet us and dripped on us, and the stiff leaves caught in my hair

and tore my pinafore. It was very wet snow, and we were soon very nice and wet. Frankie looked back at me and laughed.

“Oh, dear! oh, dear! you’ll catch it, and no mistake.”

“And so will you, Frankie,” I said. “Why, you are even naughtier than me, for you asked me to do it.”

“Well, never mind,” Frankie said. “It’s snowing very fast, and we’ll soon be covered. Come along this pathway, Bo-Peep, where the snow is very deep. There’s icicles hanging on to my nose, and there’s a fringe of snow round my ears. I’m a kind of snow-man, and you’re a Snow-Queen, Bo-Peep.”

“I do wish an icicle would come on my nose,” I said. “Oh! Frankie, is we deep enough now?”



W

We were up to our knees in the soft snow, and I think one of my shoes was lost, and Frankie did look so funny with all his goldy hair turned white, and my poor caravan was getting very wet and I was afraid Lullaby would catch cold.

“I think we have gone deep enough,” I said. For I was frightened about poor Lullaby, because I did not think she was very strong.

But Frankie said, “Come on! come on! I am Snow-King and you are Snow-Queen, and I hope we will soon get into a drift.”

Frankie shouted, and waved his arms in the air, and he pulled the caravan after him, and he did not mind even when the poor horse Rover fell on his side. I could not keep up to Frankie, and my feet were so cold.

Just then what do you think happened? The caravan fell right over on its side, and poor Lullaby was flung out of the caravan. I saw my dolly lying flat out on the cold snow, and I stretched out my arms to her. I thought I was catching her, but instead of that I began to fall and fall, and I heard Frankie say, "Hullo! Bo-Peep, you are a real Snow-Queen, and you are going to be swallowed up in a drift."

I was frightened then, and I was so sorry I had been naughty, and I said, "Please, God, forgive Bo-Peep." But the snow was very soft, and it came into my mouth and shut up my eyes, and I remembered no more.

CHAPTER VII.

MY LOST DOLLY.

I DID feel so funny. I was lying on the floor in the nursery, just in front of the hot fire, and Nursie was rubbing me and mother was crying. Oh! I did feel such a pain in my heart when I saw my own darlingest mother crying, and I said, "I am going to get out of bed at the right side to-morrow,—I am, Nursie,—I am, indeed, and I am not going to do it literal, Nursie, because Frankie said I could not."

My own mother looked at Nursie, and said, in such a frightened kind of voice, "I do believe Bo-Peep has gone off her head,

and I think we had better send for the doctor at once."

I was feeling quite warm and nice, and I put up my hand to the place where my head ought to be, and it was there as safe as possible.

So I said, "My head has not rolled away, mother, and I am sorry I am naughty, and I am not going to be naughty any more."

Nursie said, "Well, you gave us a fine fright, miss."

But mother only smiled and kissed me, and she said, "Mother's little darling daughter! Mother's little Bo-Peep will try to be good for mother's sake."

After that I was put into a warm bed, and I was given a hot drink, and I really felt quite nicely. Ellen came and sat by me, and I asked her where Frankie was.



“ELLEN CAME AND SAT BY ME.”

“Frankie has been punished,” Ellen said. “He’s down in the study, standing on a chair with his face to the wall. He has been standing there for a whole hour now.”

“Oh, dear! Oh, dear!” I said. “I am so sorry,—poor, poor Frankie!”

“Naughty Frankie, I say,” Ellen said; “why, Miss Bo-Peep, he might have killed you with his pranks. I can tell you, miss, your papa was pretty frightened when he saw your two little feet sticking up in the air and your head down in a drift.”

“That was not Frankie’s fault,” I said; “I remember it all now. I was trying to save Lullaby. Oh, Ellen, where is my dolly Lullaby?”

“That doll!” Ellen said. “Oh, we must get Cook to make you up another rag-baby, Miss Bo-Peep.”

“No,” I said, and I felt my face getting so red. “I do not want no other dolly. I want my own Lullaby that has got the crooked nose, and the blot of ink on her cheek, and what was made out of father’s old shirts and two pocket-handkerchiefs. Give me Lullaby at once, Ellen. I so feared she has caught a great cold out in the snow, for she is not strong. Give me my dolly, that I may sing her to sleep.”

“Oh! I cannot, Miss Bo-Peep,” Ellen said; “she went down into the drift ever so much farther than you did, and she is quite lost. You must forget Lullaby, my dear.”

“I am not going to,” I said. “You are a horrid Ellen, and I hate you. I was mamma to Lullaby and I—I—cannot forget her.”

“ You shall have another doll, my dear,”
Ellen said.

“ I will not,” I said to Ellen. “ I was
mamma to my own Lullaby. Oh! my
dolly! my dear dolly!”

I popped my head under the bedclothes
and I cried for a long, long time. I was
a mamma, and my dolly was lost. I did
cry very hard.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GREAT FUSS.

My dolly Lullaby was quite lost, and I could not forget her. I was well again, and in the day nursery, and Frankie had come back from the study and had forgot all about standing on the chair with his face to the wall. A great many days had gone by, and Frankie and me, we was good, and we did not get out of bed the wrong way, and we did not go out in the snow without leave. We was good and we had lots of treats; we had tea-parties and I poured out the tea, and we had blind-man's-buff and Frankie always would

be the blind man, and father and mother often sent for us to come down-stairs. We was good,— I know we was; but I was not quite happy, for I could not forget Lullaby.

Frankie used to say, “Now, Bo-Beep, you really are a silly. Who would fret for a doll that was only made out of father’s old shirts and some pocket-handkerchiefs ? ”

But I always said to Frankie, very mournful, “Frankie, you is not a mamma, and you cannot understand.”

Frankie laughed when I spoke so solemn, but I used to sit down with my face to the wall and cry for Lullaby.

One day there was a darling fuss in the house,— I love fusses. I love to hear people run up and down the stairs very fast, and I’m more glad than anything when

the doors are banging and people's voices are sounding quick,—quick.

One day there was a fuss,—a cab came and stopped at the front door, and the front door bell went ding-dong very loud, and Frankie and I, we ran on to the landing and peeped through the banisters. The front door was opened very wide, and who should come in but grandpapa! In he came, with his hair as white as the snow, and a darling little bend in his back, and he fussed up and down in the hall, and James the footman brought in heaps and heaps of parcels.

“Now we'll have presents,” said Frankie. “Hurrah! hurrah, Bo-Peep! are not you glad?”

“I want to kiss my darling grandpapa,” I said.

“Well,” said Frankie, “I'm sure girls

always do like kissing. I would not be a girl for the world, but of course you cannot help yourself, Bo-Peep. Now I do wonder what present grandpapa has brought to me. I hope he has brought me a pistol."

"Oh, Frankie!" I said.

"Yes, a real pistol," said Frankie, strutting up and down. "Oh! Bo-Peep, do let us come down-stairs. There's a fuss down-stairs. Come along, Bo-Peep. Come along."

I knew it was naughty to go down without leave, but I felt that I must get into the fuss, and when Frankie pulled me, I ran, and every step I ran faster, and so, in a minute, I found myself in the drawing-room with father and mother and my darling little grandpapa.

I call my grandpapa little, because he is

very old, and Ellen says when people are old, they begin to grow down, and that is why grandpapa has got that stoop in his back, and that is why I can see so plain into his kindest of eyes.

He came up to me and he kissed me.

CHAPTER IX.

A SHOP DOLLY.

“So this is the poor little mamma that I have heard such a sad story about? Give me one of your sweetest kisses, darling, and take this and see if it will comfort you.”

Grandpapa put a long soft parcel into my arms. I knew what it was the minute I felt it. My eyes got quite misty, but I had no time to cry. I flopped down on the floor and I opened the softy parcel, and there was a dolly inside.

“You’re a mamma again, Bo-Peep,” grandpapa said.

“Yes, I is,” I said. “She’s a beautiful dolly.”

“Now that is a doll something worth having,” Frank said. “She was made in a shop,—that doll was,—she has no horrid blot on her cheek, and her eyes are darling and blue. We’ll take her out in the caravan, won’t we, Bo-Peep? and aren’t you glad now that you lost that old Lullaby, and have got this lovely new dolly?”

“She is a lovely dolly,” I said, and I got up from the floor and I kissed grandpapa. “Grandpapa,” I said, “may I take my new doll that you bought in a shop up-stairs, and may I put her on my own shelf in the toy cupboard, where she will be very, very safe, grandpapa?”

Grandpapa opened his eyes wide. “Why, yes, Bo-Peep,” he said, “if that is

really what you would like best to do. I should have thought, however, that poor dolly would like a little petting and kissing instead of being put safely away in the toy cupboard."

"I so much obliged to you, grandpapa," I said, "and she is a very nice shop dolly. I will take her up-stairs now, please."

I didn't care a bit for any more of the fuss, and I didn't want to hurry back to the drawing-room, although I heard Frankie shouting, and I knew he had got some lovely present from grandpapa. I looked at my new doll as I carried her up-stairs. She had on a little pink frock with flounces, and all the flounces were bordered with lace, and she had real shoes and stockings, and her arms were the same color as my arms, and her face was white and pink, and her nose was very

straight, and she had goldy hair on her head, something like Frankie's hair. Her eyes were blue, and they smiled at me, and I took her and give her a kiss. The minute I kissed her I knew something,— I knew that her pink and white face was hard and cold, and that she wasn't a dolly to fondle and pet.

“I will not be a mamma to her,” I said aloud. “I will not sing hush-a-bye-baby-on-the-tree-top to her. She is a beauty shop doll, but I am not her mamma. I do not like straight noses on dollies, and I do not like pink and white faces, and I do like crookedy noses and blots of ink. This dolly shall stay in the toy cupboard, and Frank may drive her in the caravan if he likes, and she may come to my tea-parties, but I will never love her as I love Lullaby.”

CHAPTER X.

I AM FRETTING.

I suppose I was not well. Nursie said so, and so did Ellen, and mother came up and felt my forehead and my hands, and she said to Nursie, "Bo-Peep's very hot," and Nursie looked very solemn back at mother and nodded her head, and then they both went away and they whispered.

I suppose it was because they whispered that the doctor came. He said, "Well, little woman, and what is all this about?"

I did like him to call me "little woman," for it showed that I was really grown up, and I looked back to see if Frankie was

in the room, because I wanted to nod at him, to show him how wise the doctor was. I said, "I am a little woman, and I don't know what is the matter, only I am hot and I am tired."

Then the doctor said, "We will soon make that right again," and then he went away, and some medicine came, and I was petted a great lot. Everybody was so kind, and I liked not being well very much indeed, because it even made Frankie respectful to me.

Frankie brought out his nicest toys and let me play with them, and Ellen showed me the birthday present she was making for her mother, and Nursie even brought baby and let him sit on my knee.

But the nicest time of all was when mother came up to the nursery and I curled into her arms and she kissed me.



COOK AND BO-PEEP.

"Is there anything I can do to please my little Bo-Peep?" mother said.

"Mother," I whispered, "I have a little pain down in my heart, and it will not go away."

"A pain, darling?" mother said.

"Yes," I said to mother, "and it will not go away,—only I am thinking maybe Cook could make it a little better."

"Cook, my dear Bo-Peep?" mother said.

"Yes, mother," I said very solemn. "I would like to see our dear, fat Cook, and then afterwards I would like to see grand-papa."

Mother did not say one other word, only she rang the bell; and when Ellen answered it, mother said, "Send Mrs. Davies up to the nursery, Ellen," and so in a few minutes Cook came.

“ Eh ! dear,” Cook said, “ and what is the matter with the dear little pet ? ”

I did love Cook, and I made her stoop down and I put my arms around her neck.

“ I am fretting, Cook,” I said.

“ Eh ! dear,” Cook said again, “ and what for, my little love ? ”

“ I am a mamma,” I said, “ and I have lost my doll-baby, — my own Lullaby is lost in the snow.”

CHAPTER XI.

GOING TO LOOK FOR LULLABY.

Cook's face all puckered up when I said that about Lullaby, and her dear nose looked more crooked than ever, and her eyes got full of little shining tears.

"Well, I never did hear nothing more touching than that," she said, and she gave me a big kiss, and she spoke in a most grave voice to mother:

"With my best respects to you, ma'am, the state of the dear child's heart quite overpowers me. Well, well, well, and to think that it was only a rag doll!"

I felt quite nicely when Cook went out

of the room, and I said, "She understands, my dear Cook does,—she quite understands."

I think I fell asleep after that, and I know when I woke I was in bed and grandpapa had come into the room.

Grandpapa was not a bit like Cook,—he had the straightest nose, and big shining eyes, and hair like silver. He sat down close to me and he said, "Do you know, Bo-Peep, that I have just had a talk with somebody who is very fond of you? You call her Cook, and I call her Mrs. Davies."

I nodded my head.

"She has made me understand something, little Bo-Peep," grandpapa said, "and I know at last why that lovely shop dolly, whom I named Angelina, never could find her way to your heart."

"She was pink and white, and very cold, that dolly was," I said.

"And you wanted a soft and battered dolly," grandpapa said; "a dolly that Frank tells me was very ugly, but that you found beautiful because you—"

Grandpapa stopped speaking, and I sat up in bed, and I looked at grandpapa and he looked at me, and then I threw my arms round my grandpapa's neck and I cried, and I said, "Grandpapa, you're not angry, 'cause I can't help loving crookedy noses and blotty cheeks, and little eyes that were only put on with ink. They are all beautiful to me, and I can never love another doll as I loved my baby doll Lullaby what was lost."

"The fact is," grandpapa said, "this is quite serious; this must be seen to. Where are you, Maggie (that was grand-

papa's name for mother)? Ah! Maggie," grandpapa said, as mother came into the room, "Bo-Peep has been showing me her heart, and I quite understand, and I respect it, and it must be soothed, Maggie, — it must be soothed. The child is fretting for a doll with a crooked nose and a blot on its cheek, and that doll has gone down into a snowdrift. Well, we must look for it, — we must give time to it, and money to it, and we must do it at once, Maggie, — we must do it at once."

Then grandpapa went very fast out of the room, and mother followed him, and Ellen came and put her arms round my neck, and said, "Get well, Bo-Peep, darling, get well."

CHAPTER XII.

FOUND.

THE snow was beginning to melt in the garden, and there was a great fuss down by the snowdrift where Lullaby had gone down. I could see the fuss from the nursery windows, and I liked it very much indeed, and I felt more than ever that I was grown up and that people knew that I was a real mamma.

The snow went quite away, and the crocuses and the snowdrops came out, but Lullaby wasn't found. Cookie brought me another rag doll with a crooked nose and a blot on its cheek,—it was very kind of Cookie, but the nose wasn't crooked

the same way, and the blot wasn't on the same part of the cheek, — I didn't care for the new rag doll, and I put it away in the toy cupboard with the shop dolly Angelina. Well, that's the story of my lost dolly Lullaby, and Ellen says "there's no more to write."

Ellen's quite wrong. Ellen must get her paper and ink again, and write away as hard as possible.

'Twas summer-time, and I had finished all my story about Lullaby, and I was standing and thinking quite mournful that I could never be a mamma to dollies no more, and that if I had twenty dollies they must all lie on the toy cupboard shelf, — I was thinking that, when Frankie burst into the room, — his hair was all goldy, and his eyes so blue, and he said :

"Mush-a-bye Baby. On the tree-top."



"I SANG MY DOLLY TO SLEEP."

“Look here, Bo-Peep, look here,—I was playing down by the brook, ever so far down, and I saw a funny kind of little cave made by two or three stones that had all got jammed together, and stuck in the cave, quite dry and with the blot still on her cheek, was your old dolly Lullaby. I suppose she had drifted down with the melting snow. Here she is! and she’s uglier than ever, and I suppose you will be more of a mamma to her even than you used to be; but of course, Bo-Peep,” Frankie said, “I am very glad if you are,” and there were real tears in Frankie’s eyes.

Oh! didn’t I kiss my own dolly Lullaby, and wasn’t Nursie glad, and Ellen glad, and didn’t mother come up and kiss me, and Cookie came from the kitchen and said:

“I do declare! and there’s the very stitches in her neck that I sewed up so quickly on Miss Bo-Peep’s birthday.”

I was a mamma once more, and I sang my dolly to sleep with

“Hush-a-bye, baby,
On the tree top.”

I knew then such a wonderful thing, that we doesn’t love things ‘cause they’s pretty, for every single body but me thinks my dolly Lullaby the ugliest doll in the world.

MOPSY AND HANS



““HAVE YOU COME TO SEE US?’ SAID MOPSY.”

(See page 66.)

MOPSY AND HANS.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE GARDEN.

“There was an old woman who lived in a shoe;
She had so many children she didn’t know what
to do,
So she gave them some broth without any bread,
And whipped them all round and sent them to
bed.”

MOPSY was five years old and Hans was six when they went into the country. It was then that their wonderful adventures began. While they were in town they lived in a dull little house which looked

into a dull little street, and nothing happened to them, although they wished very much that something would. In the country there was nothing dull, and they were now sure that something delightful must happen. At the back of their new home was a large garden, and here they were allowed to play from morning till night. The garden was not very orderly; there were a great many weeds in the little narrow walks which ran among the flower beds. The grass, too, was long and uncut, and even some of the flowers were quite choked up with bindweed. But Mopsy and her brother thought this garden delightful. They liked it all the better for being untidy, for now the grown people made no fuss about it, and the children had it to themselves. They picked daisies from among the grass,

and they pulled aside the bindweed to gather the larkspur or the sweet peas, which grew beneath.

Mopsy and Hans had not been many days playing in this garden before their first wonderful adventure came to them. Mopsy was walking on tiptoe, trying to catch a large butterfly with crimson wings, when Hans shouted in a voice of great excitement:

“Oh, Mopsy, look there !”

“Where ?” asked Mopsy.

“There, standing by the larkspur. Oh ! did you ever see anything so funny, or so very, very small ?”

Mopsy’s blue eyes had to travel down a long way, then she, too, gave a shout of delight. “Oh, Hans !” she said, “let’s go to her,—let’s go to her at once,—why, she must be a real live fairy.”

Hans drew back, half alarmed, but Mopsy ran straight up to the quaintest little figure she had ever seen.

“Who are you? What is your name?” she asked. “Why are you standing by the larkspur? Have you come to see us?”

“If you ask me more questions than one, my dear child,” replied the odd little figure, “my poor head will get more muddled than ever. I am the ‘Old Woman who lived in the Shoe.’”

“Oh, Hans!” exclaimed Mopsy, “did you listen to what she said? Oh, if there is any one I love it is that old woman. I have said the rhyme about her over and over again, and, oh, how delighted I am to see her at last!”

Then Mopsy, suddenly remembering her manners, dropped a very polite curt-

sey, and said, in a clear little voice, "I am so glad to see you, old woman; and have you still so many children you don't know what to do?"

"No, my dear, that is not the case just now," replied the little old woman, looking up at Mopsy, from under the shade of her big poke-bonnet. "Two of my children have been naughty, and have run away, and, as I never can bear to see vacant places in the shoe, I have come to try to find two more. Will you come and live with me in the shoe, dear little children?"

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD WOMAN COMES FOR THEM.

“WE should like it of all things,” exclaimed Mopsy and Hans, in a single breath. “When can we come? Where is the Shoe, and how are we to fit into it?”

“I shall feel more muddly than ever if I answer so many questions at a time,” answered the little old woman. “I never like impatient children, and, even if I take you to the Shoe, I won’t keep you long there if you worry me. Go home now, and go to bed at your usual hour, and afterwards — expect me.”

“Expect you after we are in bed?” said Mopsy. “Oh, how delicious!”

But she spoke to empty air, for the little woman had vanished.

Mopsy and Hans as a rule hated their bed-hour, but to-night they were so eager to have their clothes taken off, to lie down in their nice little white cots, and to have the curtains drawn across the windows, and the night nursery made as dark as possible, that Anna Maria, their nurse, became almost alarmed, and wondered if they were going to be ill. She could never, however, resist the chance of a little quiet time without the children playing round her, and she undressed them fast enough and popped them into bed, and made the room as dark as the summer evening would permit, with right good-will.

"I expect you are overtired, my pets," she said, "but if you go to sleep at once, you will be as fresh and chirpy as little buttons in the morning."

Then she shut the door and left the children by themselves.

"Now," said Hans, sitting up in bed, and turning his pretty flushed face towards his little sister.

Mopsy could not be seen very distinctly, for the curtains hung against the window were thick and dark, but she held up her forefinger warningly to Hans, and said in a kind of low, buzzing voice:

"Hush, Hans, I am sure we mustn't talk, and of course we must not think of going to sleep. Let's sit very quiet, and perhaps she'll come soon."

Then they both sat upright in their cots, gazing straight before them, their

hearts beating a little quicker than usual, and their two pairs of eyes very bright and expectant.

“Mopsy,” said Hans, in an almost frightened voice. Although he was older than Mopsy, he was a little inclined to cling to her for protection, whenever anything out of the common happened. “She’s come!” exclaimed Hans,— and so she had, for she stood upon the brass knob of Mopsy’s bed, and looked down at her.

“It’s all right now,” said the little woman. “I said I’d come, and I have come. I’m going to take you both to spend a day with my children and myself in the Shoe. If I like *you* and you like *it*,— the Shoe, I mean,— you can stay there longer. But if I don’t like you, and you don’t like it, why I’ll whip you both as I do the other children, and send you home.

Come, now, we have no time to lose. I'm a woman of few words, and if I'm asked too many questions at a time, I get muddled, so don't ask them, but come along."

The little woman looked quite fierce, and when she waved her wand at Mopsy and Hans they both scrambled out of bed, and followed her to the door.

CHAPTER III.

THEY GROW SMALL.

THEY went straight through the day nursery where Anna Maria was sitting mending a pair of stockings, which Hans had shattered at the knees, when he fell that day in the garden. Hans and Mopsy felt quite sure that she would call to them and tell them to go straight back to bed, but she did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, she went on calmly working, and never even turned her head, when the old woman said, in a high-pitched, rather cross voice:

“Come on! do! If there is a thing that muddles me more than ever, it is

having anything to say to children who dawdle."

Then they went down-stairs and out into the garden, and lo, and behold! it wasn't evening at all, but morning, bright, beautiful, sunshiny morning. The little woman walked on in front, and the two children followed her, until, at last, they all came to where the larkspur stood, very erect, and in full flower. The little woman only reached up to its lowest blossoms, but Mopsy and Hans were taller than the flower, and for the first time it occurred to them that perhaps they could not fit into the shoe.

"How are we to manage?" they both exclaimed together. "Unless it is a very large shoe indeed, we cannot possibly get into it." The little woman turned and gave them a very withering glance.

“How is it that I and my eleven children all fit comfortably into the Shoe now?” she said. “And how is it we have room for two more, and the Shoe is so empty without the two who ran away, that I have to go out to find some more to take their places? You answer me that, and don’t both speak at once, or I shall get muddled.”

“But I thought,” said Mopsy, her words coming quickly, and her face getting very red, “that you had twelve children. I was always told you had a dozen children, but if two have run away, and there are eleven in the shoe, that makes thirteen.”

“And thirteen is a baker’s dozen,” said the old woman. “Oh! you do muddle me, — now do come on!”

“But we are too big,” persisted Hans. The little woman stamped her foot.

“Did you, or did you not, ever read ‘Alice in Wonderland’?”

“‘Alice in Wonderland’?” they both exclaimed. “Of course we have read ‘Alice in Wonderland.’”

“And how did she get small when she wanted to?”

“The first time,” said Mopsy, in a reflective voice, “she drank something out of a bottle.”

“Well, then, stupid, can’t you eat something out of a box? Here’s a chocolate for each of you. Eat them quickly and come on, for the children will be starving for their breakfast.”

Then she hurried down the path, Mopsy and Hans following her, munching their chocolate as they went, and growing smaller each moment. By the time they reached the end of the garden

they were a head and shoulders below the little woman, and their feet were so tiny they were quite out of breath keeping up with her.

“Now we have got to get over the wall,” said the woman. They no longer called her small, for she looked enormous, and as for the wall, which was in reality three feet high, crane their necks as they would, they could not see over it.

CHAPTER IV.

THEY ARRIVE AT THE SHOE.

“We can’t climb over the wall,” said Mopsy, who felt inclined to cry, for she was now most anxious to reach the Shoe.

“We can’t possibly climb the wall,” repeated Hans.

“Am I asking you to climb the wall?” asked the little woman. “Oh, how you muddle me.”

Here she took a whistle out of her pocket, and blew a clear, long, sweet note, and instantly there flew down over the wall three perfectly black crows, each furnished with an exquisite little saddle and

bridle. One crow hopped up to the old woman, another to Mopsy, and another to Hans, and their bright eyes said, as plainly as possible, "Mount me." Hans sprang into his saddle in a moment, Mopsy into hers, and the old woman, to whom the largest crow had hopped, into hers; then the birds gently opened their wings and flew upwards through the air, and right away, into space.

Mopsy and Hans felt a little out of breath at first, but that feeling quickly passed, and afterwards, when they were describing their adventures, they said they never had such a delicious ride in their lives. They went what seemed a very long way to such tiny people as they had now become, but in reality it was not far at all. At last the three crows lowered their wings, and put them gently

down on the ground in front of the Shoe.

Yes, certainly, the Shoe did not look at all small; it had a door and windows, and a roof; it had a deep heel at one side, which the little woman said was the kitchen, and a very pointed and turned-up toe at the other, which she said was the stairway leading on to the roof. The windows had tiny panes of real glass, and the hall door was painted green, and had a very pretty brass knocker. There were three steps up to the hall door, and, when the old woman mounted them and sounded a loud rat-tat with the knocker, there was a great noise heard within, of hurrying and running about.

“ Those are the children; oh, how naughty they sound to-day; but I have my whip handy in a corner. Here, chil-



THE SHOE.

dren, open the door, open the door,— I've brought two more, the prettiest little pair you ever saw in your lives."

The children now popped their heads out of all the windows, and rushed about and screamed, and their poor mother certainly looked more muddled than ever. Mopsy and Hans thought they had never seen so many children all together in their lives, and could scarcely believe there were only eleven. That was the exact number, however, and these were their names:

Cilly and Milly,
Tizzie and Lizzie,
Jack and Jill,
Tom and Bill,
Cobweb,
Titmouse and
Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

Hop-o'-my-Thumb was the tiniest of all. She was a very pretty little creature, and she rushed out now, and, taking Mopsy's hand, dragged her into the Shoe. Hans came in between Lizzie and Tizzie. When they got inside, they thought the Shoe a very large place.

CHAPTER V.

THEY BREAKFAST.

EVERYTHING goes by comparison, and Hans and Mopsy had not been half an hour in the Shoe before they began to think it quite possible that they might lose themselves in it. There were so many staircases, and so many rooms, and such funny landing-places, and such queer cupboards, that they surely thought that they had never before been in such a wonderful and bewildering place. The rooms were all abundantly furnished. They had carpets, and tables, and chairs, and curtains to the windows, and blinds to keep out the sun. In the drawing-

room, which was a long, low room, running right across the Shoe, there were even pictures on the walls,—such funny pictures of the children and their mother in different queer attitudes.

“Those are photographs,” said the little woman, “taken of us by people who don’t understand us in the least. I have had them framed, and hung them up to laugh at them. There is nothing my children and I enjoy so much as a good laugh, for the people in the world have told so many lies about us, and they don’t understand us in the least. Now, children, breakfast, breakfast, breakfast! If I don’t have my breakfast instantly I shall be muddled for the rest of the day.”

“We’re to have broth without any bread for breakfast,” whispered Hans to Tizzie and Lizzie.

He spoke in a low voice, but the old woman heard him and looked at him severely.

“That’s one of the lies,” she said; “there’s a picture about that on the wall. You can look at it by and by. Broth without any bread indeed! How do you suppose I could bring up a family like you see surrounding me on that wishy-washy fare? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Will you come into breakfast, children? My poor head is fairly spinning as if it were a teetotum, round and round.”

“But you have got the whip, anyway,” persisted Hans, who was apt to be very obstinate in maintaining his opinion, and not always polite about it.

“Yes, and I’ll use it on you, if you don’t sit quietly down to your breakfast this minute.”

The little woman shook her wand so angrily that Hans dropped into his place at the breakfast-table in the pleasant dining-parlor without a word.

Tizzie and Lizzie were very attentive to him, and he drank the most delicious milk out of a cup formed out of a tiny sea-shell, but the cup looked anything but small to Hans now. There was bread and butter for breakfast, and strawberries and cream, and, besides the shells full of milk for each of the children, a tiny teapot of tea for the little woman herself. The teapot was made of some shining metal, and was extremely bright and pretty, and the little woman drank several cups, too many for Mopsy to count, from its contents.

“But I don’t see the honey,” suddenly exclaimed Hop-o’-my-Thumb, beginning

to cry loudly. "The bees have never brought the honey."

"What a silly you are, Hop-o'-my-Thumb," exclaimed Cobweb; "you always are so impatient. Here come the bees."

And here they were with a pretty Bizz-z-z! and their honey pouches full of honey.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WHIP.

COBWEB had scarcely ceased speaking before a very loud buzzing sound filled the whole room, and two enormous bees flew in through one of the open windows, and emptied the contents of their honey-bags on a little dish evidently set aside for the purpose. Having done this, they buzzed all round the room, and out again through the window.

“They bring us our honey like that every day,” exclaimed Cilly and Milly. “We put the dish all ready, and the bees fill it. Why, mother, what is the matter?”

“I’m going to whip you all round,”

exclaimed the mother. "It's part of the programme, and you'd better submit without any howling, or I'll get too muddled to dress the dinner. Let the naughtiest child go and fetch the whip."

It was wonderful how good every child in the Shoe became at this moment. Hop-o'-my-Thumb put her hands meekly into her lap, Cobweb looked straight before him, Jack and Jill began whistling softly under their breaths, and as to Cilly and Milly, they went up to their mother, and began fanning her gently with dock-leaves.

"Let the naughtiest child go and fetch the whip," said the little old woman, pouring herself out her thirteenth cup of tea as she spoke.

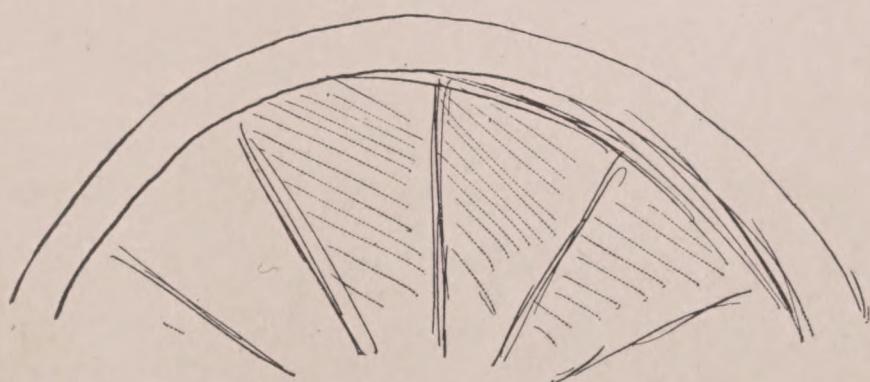
"Hans, you are much the naughtiest child," exclaimed Tizzie, poking Hans

violently in the ribs, and causing him to drop a spoonful of honey, which he was raising to his lips, on to the table-cloth. "There, now," continued Tizzie, "see what you've done,—you are much the naughtiest,—it's either you or Mopsy who must go. Isn't it, Lizzie?"

"Either Mopsy or Hans, certainly," echoed all the other children in the Shoe.

"Oh! if it comes to that, I won't put it on Mopsy," exclaimed Hans, who was a very plucky little fellow, and who suddenly remembered two things: first, that he was a year older than his sister; second, that he was a boy, and ought, therefore, to protect her.

"I'll go, if it comes to that," he said, and he slipped down off his seat, and made for the door.



“HE THREW THE WHIP OUT AS FAR AS IT COULD GO.”

“Let the naughtiest child fetch the whip,” said the old woman, as she drained her thirteenth cup of tea. “Oh! how muddled I feel! Let the naughtiest child fetch the whip, and fetch it at once.”

Hans walked out of the room, these words sounding in his ears.

He went along two passages and up some funny little flights of stairs, until at last he came to the drawing-room, where the photographs hung on the walls, and the curtains, made out of cobwebs, swayed gently backwards and forwards in the soft summer breeze. In one corner of the room stood the dreadful whip. Hans seized it in both his little hands,—oh! what tiny hands he had now, although they did not look at all small to himself,—and then a sudden brave thought came into his head. He

marched straight to the open window, and threw the whip out as far as it could go. He stood looking out of the window for a few moments, and then turned empty-handed, and walked back slowly to the parlor.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD WOMAN FALLS ASLEEP.

HE was very much relieved when he got there. The children had all left the breakfast-table, and were scrambling about, and tumbling about over one another on the floor. Hans quite started when he saw them; they had been all so good and mouse-like when he left them. Now they were screaming, and laughing, and quarrelling, and making up again, all in a breath, and Hans wondered if there was another whip, and if it had been used by the little woman, and if the punishment

— the dreaded punishment — was already a thing of the past.

He came in shyly, looking carefully round him, and then he saw the explanation of everything. The little woman was lying back in her chair, with her mouth wide open, snoring loudly; she was fast asleep.

“She always sleeps like that when we fan her with dock-leaves,” said Tizzie and Lizzie. “She’ll sleep like that for hours now, and forget all about the whip. Let’s come and play.”

Then Tizzie took one of the little boy’s hands in her own, and Lizzie took the other, and Milly joined hands with Lizzie, and Cilly with Milly, and Jack with her, and Jill with him, and so on, and so on, until all the children of the Shoe danced out of the parlor and along the passages,

and through the drawing-room, and out again, up the narrow stairs at the toe of the Shoe, until they found themselves on the flat roof overhead.

Here they did have a time of it. Never, never surely before did children laugh so heartily, or shout so loud ; never before was there known to be such a delightful game of “ hide-and-seek ” as they played around the chimney-pots on the top of the Shoe.

Hans laughed until he felt ill, and then he whispered to Mopsy that never, never, never would he go home again. Mopsy, too, was wildly excited ; she thought Hop-o'-my-Thumb one of the dearest little playmates in all the world. She preferred her to the baby kitten at home, and to the unfledged doves in the dove-cote. Mopsy was a very tiny creature herself now, but

Hop-o'-my-Thumb was even smaller, and Mopsy already loved her as if she were really her tiny sister.

The children played for a couple of hours, the merriest, jolliest games, when Cobweb suddenly exclaimed that he felt very hungry. Instantly the whole party joined hands, danced down the narrow staircase, along the passages, through the drawing-room, through the dining-parlor, where the little woman still slept and snored, and so down into the heel of the Shoe,—in other words, the kitchen.

“We’d better be quick,” said Lizzie. “I saw mother nodding her head a little; she generally does that before she wakes; now let’s choose what we each like best, and take it up on the roof to eat before mother awakes, and gets more muddled than ever.”



“THE WHOLE PARTY DANCED DOWN THE NARROW
STAIRCASE.”

At these words of Lizzie's the children hastened to provide themselves with what eatables they could lay hands on. Hans secured a pot of strawberry jam; Mopsy a tiny pigeon pie; Tizzie made off with two hard-boiled eggs; Lizzie had a small plum cake; Jack filled a little bag with chocolate creams, and Jill stuffed her pockets with six squares of butter-scotch. Hop-o'-my-Thumb had a large, rosy apple, and Titmouse clasped a gingerbread pig with gilt eyes in both his hands.

"I'm more muddled than ever," said a voice in the distance. The children fled.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEY RUN AWAY FROM THE SHOE.

THEY ran as hard as ever they could. They forgot to clasp hands, and went helter-skelter through the Shoe. So great was their fright and agitation that they dropped their spoils as they ran. The gingerbread pig fell from Titmouse's tiny fingers, and was broken into a thousand pieces, and the pot of jam which Hans carried fell with a crash on the floor.

“Oh! was there ever such an unfortunate woman! Oh, these children, these children! I’m more muddled than ever!” screamed a voice in the distance. “See if I don’t act up to all the pictures after this,

—see if I don't give them some broth without any bread,—see if I don't whip them all round and put them to bed. Oh, my poor head! I'm more muddled than ever!"

The children ran and ran. They scrambled up the steep stairs at the toe of the Shoe, and once again, panting and breathless, found themselves on the roof.

"We can't stay here,—we can't possibly stay here," said Cilly. "She'll find us soon, and she'll whip us so hard. We must go away,—we must all go away until she is tired, and has had another sleep, and then she'll forget all about it; let's make for the dock-leaf-tree, let's make for the dock-leaf-tree!"

One side of the roof of the Shoe was shaded by what looked like a huge overshadowing tree, but was really only a fine

dock-leaf plant. All the children rushed in this direction, and a moment later they were all swarming down the dock-leaf-tree as hard as they could go.

“She’ll whip us all round and send us to bed,” they said. And their little faces really looked quite pale and pinched with anxiety.

Hans and Mopsy, although they were quite small children now, and had come to consider the Shoe as their rightful home, were not nearly so frightened as the others. They held their heads high, and felt rather inclined to look down on Cilly and Milly and the rest. They had no right to do so, for their bravery was only caused by the fact that they both knew,—for Hans had whispered the important news to his sister,—that the dreadful whip was no longer in the house.



“A MOMENT LATER THEY WERE ALL SWARMING DOWN
THE DOCK - LEAF - TREE.”

The dock-leaf-tree, however, looked most inviting, and Hans and Mopsy swarmed down it with the rest. When all the children found themselves at the bottom, they looked in one another's faces; they knew they had done a very bold thing, and they quite caught their breath with wonder and delight.

“Let's go into the forest,” said Cilly, “now that we are here; now that we are every one of us out of the shoe, let's go into the forest, and talk to the giant mice and ask the bees to bring us our dinner.”

“But there's no forest near here,” said Hans, who remembered his old life quite well. “This is a terrible flat country, and there aren't any trees.”

“What do you call those?” said Tit-mouse, pointing with his finger. “If you don't call those trees, Hans, you must

have lost your eyes. See, just at the other side of that wide, white plain."

The white plain was in reality the highroad, and Titmouse's trees were tall grasses. To Hans also they now looked enormous. He smiled and took the little girl's hand, and said he would like to go into the forest.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD WOMAN WAKES UP.

ALL the children had a very happy time in the forest, and the giant mice came out and talked to them, and the bees brought them honey, and a splendid butterfly with brown wings and a scarlet body took Hop-o'-my-Thumb for a ride, and brought her back again to her brothers and sisters quite safely. Titmouse wanted to go, too, but the butterfly said he was too heavy,—she promised, however, that if the children stayed out long enough she would send a couple of friendly bats to take them for a ride in the evening. They sat down very comfortably under the tall sheltering grasses,

and dear little Hop-o'-my-Thumb got into Mopsy's lap, and laid her head on her shoulder. They had talked and laughed together, and were beginning to get a little hungry again, and to wish that the bees would bring them some more honey, when a high, passionate crying voice was heard coming nearer and nearer:

“I am the old woman who lives in the Shoe,
I have so many children I don't know what to
do,—
So I *will* give them some broth without any
bread,
And I *will* whip them all round, and send them
to bed!
I *will*, I *will*, — oh, my poor muddled head !”

The voice sounded alarmingly near, and although Cilly and Milly and most of the other children managed to escape, poor Mopsy suddenly found herself lifted on to

the little old woman's shoulder, who began running with her as fast as ever she could back to the Shoe. Hop-o'-my-Thumb still clung to Mopsy, but the little old woman scarcely saw her, or, if she did, she did not care. She ran as hard as ever she could, shaking poor Mopsy up and down as she did so. At last she reached the Shoe, and, running up the steps, let herself in with a tiny latch-key, and rushed into the dining-parlor. Here she threw Mopsy and Hop-o'-my-Thumb violently on to the dining-table.

“Oh, you naughty children,” she said, as soon as she could speak; “you naughty, naughty children! Where's the whip? What have you done with the whip? Don't you know that I am lost without it? That I have no authority at all without it?”

“ If you please,” said Mopsy, not answering the question about the whip, but drawing herself up to as dignified a height as her tiny stature would allow, and still holding Hop-o'-my-Thumb by the hand, “ if you please, I’d like to go home, and I’d like to take Hop-o'-my-Thumb with me. You said that Hans and I might come for a day to see if we liked it; well, we don’t like it. We’d rather go home, and be a little dull, than have all the frights you give the children who live in the Shoe. May I go home now, and take Hop-o'-my-Thumb with me, old woman? And will you send Hans home, too, as soon as he comes back? ”

“ I never! ” said the little old woman. “ I never! oh, my poor head! Home? It’s to bed you shall go,— to bed without any bread! Come, come, come! ”

CHAPTER X.

TIME TO GO TO BED.

THE little old woman took Mopsy's hand, leaving poor Hop-o'-my-Thumb sitting all alone on the centre of the dining-table. She hurried her up-stairs, she hurried her down-stairs, and through my lady's chamber, until they came to a kind of dormitory or long, low room at the side of the Shoe, with numbers of tiny white beds in it.

The beds stood in rows, and were neatly made, and covered with very white sheets, and snowy counterpanes, and pillows with pretty frilled edges.

They looked quite cool and inviting,

and when Mopsy saw her bed, she ceased to cry or to struggle, and thought that it would not be at all unpleasant to lie down for an hour or so, and have a sleep.

The moment she got her into the room the little woman began to undress her. She took off her clothes one by one, and gave her instead a little white night-dress, all frilled and ruffled, and ornamented with tiny bows of sky-blue ribbon. Mopsy exclaimed with delight when she saw it; it was much, much prettier than the night-dress she wore at home.

“Now,” said the woman, “you shall step into bed as soon as you are ready.”

“But I am ready now,” said Mopsy, who began to feel herself getting more and more sleepy.

“Nothing of the kind; you are not ready until I say the word, and I don’t

intend to say it until you have folded up those clothes, which you have just taken off, to my satisfaction. There they are, on the floor; pick them up and fold them, and let me know when you have done. I'll sit here. I'm not in the slightest hurry."

"That won't take long," said Mopsy, laughing, and picking up her frock and her little white petticoat, and her shoes and stockings, and placing them in what she considered a very neat attitude on the chair near her little bed. Then she folded her hands, and looked at the little old woman.

While Mopsy was folding her clothes the old woman had seated herself on another of the little beds, and, shutting her eyes and opening her mouth, began to sleep and to snore very loudly.

“The clothes are folded now,” sang out Mopsy, in a voice of triumph.

The little woman instantly opened the corner of one eye, and glanced in the direction of the chair, where Mopsy’s clothes now lay in a little pile, the shoes on the top of everything else, looking as neat as possible.

“You don’t call that tidy?” said the little woman. “Begin again,” and she stretched out her foot and knocked the chair over, scattering all the clothes on the floor.

Poor Mopsy did begin again, and again, and again, but every time with the same result; the little woman opened the corner of one eye, and said, “You don’t call that tidy?” and knocked the chair over with the point of her toe.

Poor Mopsy! she felt so tired, and every

moment she grew sleepier, until at last she began to fold up her clothes with her eyes shut, with very little idea of what she was doing, and caring very little whether it was done tidily.

CHAPTER XI.

MOPSY REBELS.

PRESENTLY a great noise, the sound of a great many footsteps, the clatter of a great many tongues, began to fill the Shoe.

“It’s the children come back,” said the little old woman, suddenly starting to her feet. “Oh! I *must* whip them all round, — oh! my whip, my whip, — oh! my head, my head!”

She ran out of the room, just pausing for a second to knock Mopsy’s chair over for the hundred and seventh time. The moment she was gone Mopsy ceased to fold her clothes, and, leaving them just as they were on the floor, tumbled into bed

and fell into a sound sleep. She had, most likely, many dreams in that slumber, for the house was full of the most exciting noise and turmoil; the children were rushing, and screaming, and dancing about, now laughing, now crying, now quarrelling, now kissing to make friends again. The little old woman's shrill tones were sometimes heard above the turmoil, and sometimes it was only the children's noise which filled the house, for the moment Cilly or Milly could get hold of a dock-leaf, they fanned their mother, whereupon she instantly, wherever she was, fell sound asleep.

Mopsy, however, was so tired that she slept through all the uproar, and when she at last opened her eyes, and sat up in her little white bed, she looked on a strange sight.

All the children, in white night-dresses, frilled and ruffled, and ornamented with tiny bows of sky-blue ribbon, were standing by their beds, folding their clothes, and the old woman was going, as fast as ever she could, from one chair to another, knocking it over with the point of her toe. The children were sighing and groaning, and doing their very best, but not one of them managed to fold his or her clothes to the satisfaction of the little woman.

Mopsy sat up and looked around her with a beating heart. Oh! what a dreadful place the Shoe was, and oh! how tired and white poor Hans looked! Surely the old woman did not mean her to begin folding her clothes again? Well, she would not,—she would simply defy her to her face.

“Oh! there you are, Mopsy,” said Hans.



“ ALL THE CHILDREN WERE FOLDING THEIR CLOTHES.”

“How tired I am; I want to go to bed, and she won’t let me; she says I have not folded my clothes tidy enough; oh! there, she has knocked them over again!”

“Nonsense!” said Mopsy, in a strong voice; “they are quite tidy enough. If she chooses to throw them on to the floor, she must pick them up herself. Get into bed, Hans, and go to sleep.”

Hans stared at his sister, then, glancing round at the little woman, he began climbing into his delicious white bed, and preparing to lay his drowsy little head on his soft pillow. Instantly, every other child followed his example; the clothes were left helter-skelter on the floor, and the little old woman stood alone in the centre of the room.

“If I don’t whip them all round for this!” she exclaimed. “Oh! my whip, my

whip, — where is my whip?" and she rushed out of the room.

She was so angry at first that she could not speak ; she could only stand and stare at the small heads, resting on the small pillows. But she soon recovered herself.

CHAPTER XII.

MOPSY AND HANS GO BACK TO THEIR HOME.

“LET’S lock the door,” said Mopsy, the moment they were alone. “Why should she worry us like this? Let’s lock the door, and then let’s every one of us run away to my father and mother, and to Anna Maria, our nurse. Oh! let’s come at once.”

Mopsy, as she spoke, hurried towards the door, and, turning the key in the lock, came back and began to put on her clothes, hurrying as she did so.

“We’ve no time to dress if we go,” said Titmouse. “We must go at once, just as

we are,—but I don't think I want to go. I'm fond of mother, and I'm used to her ways, and I couldn't live in any house except a shoe. I know I couldn't. Is your house a shoe, Mopsy?"

"Oh, no!" said Mopsy, in a voice of disdain.

"Then it wouldn't suit me at all. Mother's very nice except when she's contrary; she's generally contrary, but no matter; good night. I'm going to sleep."

Titmouse's words were echoed by all the other children, except Hans, who came close up to Mopsy, and whispered, with tears in his eyes, that he wanted to go home very badly indeed.

"Then we'll go together, dear," said Mopsy. And they both climbed out of one of the windows, and got into the dock-leaf-tree,—only just in time; for

the old woman had come back to the door, and was thundering violently at it, and shouting that she had found her whip, that she had seen it from the drawing-room window, and had brought it back.

Hans and Mopsy trembled violently when they reached the ground, but nevertheless, they managed to get safely away, and as they trotted off towards their home they looked into each other's eyes, and declared solemnly that nothing would ever induce them to spend another day in the Shoe.

“Well, children,” said Anna Maria, their nurse, the next day, “it’s quite plain that you two must have eaten something to disagree with you yesterday, for never, never, did I sleep in the

room with such fidgety, restless little folks."

Hans and Mopsy looked at each other.

"Oh! we've had such a wonderful night," said Mopsy, "only it seemed to be a day; we were with the little old woman who lives in a shoe."

"Poor dear," said Anna Maria, going up and feeling Mopsy's hands, "have you got a bit of a headache, dear, that you talk so queer?"

"Oh, no!" said Mopsy. "I feel very well, only I never knew I could so suddenly become a big girl again."

"And I, a big boy," said Hans.

And then they both went out, and sat side by side, close to the big larkspur, and began to talk about their adventures. Nothing would ever induce either of them to believe that they had dreamt some-

thing,—both of them together,—and that the little old woman and her eleven children did not live quite close to them.

“We’ll go and look for her, some fine morning,” said Hans. “I’m quite sure I shall know exactly where to find her and the Shoe, and all the children. But never again will we spend a day there, will we, Mopsy?”

“Never,” said Mopsy.



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